

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY REGISTER.

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## THE LEADER OF THE BLIND.

TO MR. CANNING.

*Kensington, 20 Feb. 1823.*

SIR,

WHEN men are blind, humanity points out that they should have a *leader*; and, in that capacity I now offer myself to you and to your benighted colleagues. The case is this: you, on Friday night last, upon being asked by *Sir Thomas Lethbridge*, whether the Government had any measure in contemplation for the relief of the landed interest, answered, "That the Honourable Baronet might rest assured that he did not think the Ministers injustice, if he doubted their sympathising, and deeply sympathising, in a dis-

“ tress, which must touch every  
“ man; that he assured the Ho-  
“ nourable Baronet that, during  
“ the last four months, in which  
“ he had been honoured with a  
“ seat in the Council, and that  
“ during many months before, the  
“ attention of the Government had  
“ been constantly directed to the  
“ subject in question; that, for  
“ some time, he had been san-  
“ guine enough to believe, that  
“ some measure of direct relief  
“ might be devised; but that now  
“ the Government *did not profess*  
“ *to see their way clear to any*  
“ *measure of direct relief*; that he  
“ could only add that, if the Ho-  
“ nourable Baronet himself saw  
“ any means, or thought he had  
“ any measure, and would sub-  
“ mit it to consideration, it would  
“ receive the special attention of  
“ Government; but that, however,

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“ it might be the duty of Ministers  
 “ to provide remedies for evils  
 “ which *could be remedied*, they  
 “ would ill discharge their duty,  
 “ if they shrank from declaring  
 “ (where they had honestly formed  
 “ such an opinion) that *no direct*  
 “ *remedy existed.*”

Now, Sir, some people thought it rude and saucy in me to entitle certain articles in the Register, “ *Mr. Canning at School.*” I knew that there was nothing at all saucy in this. I knew I was your political master. I knew that I had ability to teach you. If you read the lessons which I gave you, you now know this yourself; and, therefore, it was due to me as well as to the country for me to insist that I was capable of teaching you. If any one could have doubted of this before, your confession must now have removed that doubt. For, *I do see my way clear to immediate relief.* And is it not rather a strange thing that it should appear never to have occurred to the *Collective Wisdom of the nation,*

that he, who so clearly *foresaw* that these very evils would arise; who described them with infinitely more exactness than prophecy ever before described future events; is it not rather strange, that, amidst all the anxiety of the “ *Collective Wisdom*” to find out something or somebody capable of devising some means or other of obtaining relief from these evils; is it not rather strange, that it never should have once occurred to any one individual of that illustrious body, to start the thought, that, by some possibility, he who had so clearly foreseen and so clearly foretold the evils, might also be able to see his way clearly, to some direct, speedy, and efficient remedy: is not this rather strange? The foreseeing and foretelling being as notorious as the sun at noon-day, and the prophet being not only *alive*, but actually reminding you, once a week, at least, of his incessant warnings, and of your supercilious contempt of those warnings?

Strange, however, as this may appear to people in general, to me it appears by no means strange. The remedy could not proceed from me, without covering you all with everlasting shame. The imprisonment in Newgate; SIDMOUTH'S sorrow expressed in the House of Lords; the Long Island exile; the ten weeks imprisonment of JOHN HAYES for going round an English Town to tell the people that I had arrived in good health; the language in the House of Commons during the season of SIX-ACTS; *Aylesford's* public declaration against an Innkeeper for suffering me to be at his Inn; in short, the endless list of persecutions and abominations practised against me; the well known history of these seemed ready to cry aloud and to demand of the nation to set up the shout of *Shame! Shame!* the moment of the adoption of any remedy suggested by me.

Yet, there is not, perhaps, in the whole nation one individual, well acquainted with these mat-

ters, who is not convinced that if power had been lodged in my hands instead of yours, a remedy, a remedy at once effectual and safe, would have been applied long and long enough ago. And, now before I proceed further, let me remind you of certain things that are past. The fate of nations depend, in many cases, upon the men that have to manage their affairs. It is the opinion of a very large part of the people, that if I had had, during the last twenty years, only a small portion of the power that you have had, the state of this country would have been widely different from that which it now is. Nature made me for great and incessant labour. She gave me a clear and quick understanding. And she never gave to any human being a more ardent love of country, and a stronger desire to promote its interests, and to cherish and preserve its renown. There was a particular period of my life, at which circumstances seemed calculated to bring these qualities



and this disposition directly and officially into the service of the country. These circumstances *did not occur to me at the time!* but, on reflection, I have since perceived them; and I cannot help now carrying you back to the period to which I allude.

The Ministry, or Cabinet, as it is called, is composed of a dozen or more of persons; but we always find, that, at bottom, there are two or three who have the real predominating influence. At present, this influence is looked upon (and, I believe, pretty truly) as being possessed by Lord LIVERPOOL, by you, and by Mr. HUSKISSON. Now, it is a very curious fact, that just two - and - twenty years ago last September, you three and I dined together at the house of that very excellent man Mr. HAMMOND, who was then an under Secretary of State, and, I believe, had for his colleague, one of you three. It is singular enough, that during the evening, the principal part of the conversation consisted of observations on

the subject of the high price of provisions at that time; on the question of large farms and small farms; on the good or evil of new enclosures; on the effect of high prices upon the morals and state of being of the labourer; and on other matters connected, more or less, with these subjects. I had wholly forgotten this circumstance, until, in 1820, I read, in a speech of my Lord LIVERPOOL, something like these words: "There are well-informed persons who have turned their attention to the subject of new enclosures, and who think, that, upon the whole, they have been productive of more harm than of good." The reading of this made me trace backwards the numerous efforts that I have made, from time to time, to inculcate this truth. I got back to observations that I had made on a pamphlet of stupid OLD GEORGE ROSE, published in the year 1799. This made me recollect, that ROSE's pamphlet, which had cited the increase of new enclosure bills as



a proof of an *increase of national prosperity*, had been remarked upon by me, upon the occasion just mentioned; and that I had then endeavoured to maintain that opinion which I have always entertained upon the subject; namely that such enclosures may be a proof of temporary or false prosperity; but that they are no proof of permanent or true prosperity. I do not mention this now as any proof of my sagacity or foresight; but I mention it merely to show how the recollection of the dinner party was brought back to my mind, after a lapse of twenty years.

But, that which I delight to think on, is, the state in which I now find myself, in comparison with that of *you three*. I do not rejoice, that you are so embarrassed. If I could forget what has passed during the intermediate time, I should feel great pain to observe this embarrassment; for you were all remarkably civil and friendly in your deportment towards me. The satisfaction I

feel; or, call it pride, if you will; for pride, it may very well be the pride I feel arises from reflecting on the course which we have run since the day of that dinner; and on the *result* of that course. You have had every advantage that it was possible for a combination of circumstances the most fortunate to give you. Riches a thousand times beyond your wants; patronage and power to surfeiting; hundreds of even clever men always ready to crawl at your feet; sycophants, verbal and literary, stifling you with their praises; and an Attorney General, watching like a lynx, to punish whoever should dare to traduce you; or even to utter with regard to you, unpalatable truths. How different has been the course which I have had to run! It needs no description: it is written in the heart of every good man in England.

And, Sir, here we are now. Here we are still. We are the same four men; and *our destiny*

*has not yet done with us!* You are the Ministers. The nation is in distress. You cannot see your way, clearly, to a direct remedy. *I can*; and I am entitled to belief when I say that *I can*; because at every stage of that progress, which has, at last, produced the distress, I foresaw and foretold the consequences. The whole nation believes that you know not what to do; and it believes that I know well what to do. Each of you has received of the public money very little short of *two hundred thousand* pounds sterling for your *services* to the country. I, for all my warnings; as a reward for services greater, perhaps, than any man ever performed for his country, received ruin and bankruptcy with the super-addition of loads of calumny, and with the consciousness that I had *no more protection from the law than if I had been a dog*. At the end of four and twenty years of more labour performed with the pen than any man living

ever performed before; at the end of four-and-twenty years of unbroken sobriety; of abstinence from all extravagance of every description, either with regard to myself or my family; at the end of twenty-four years of kindness and even generosity to every creature that had ever been in my employ; at the end of those twenty-four years, during which, I had earned, with my pen, seventy thousand pounds, and had reared a family of seven children, without ever having so much as spoken a harsh word to one of them; at the end of those twenty-four years, during which, I had lost many thousand pounds by bad debts, without ever having caused a writ to be issued in the whole course of my life; at the end of those twenty-four years, I saw myself, in 1820, *without one single shilling*. And, ask wife and children whether they ever saw me for one moment in anger, or saw me look sad. Think, then, Sir, of the conduct of Lord ELLENBOROUGH, the other day at Ep-

som: let the nation look at that conduct. Let the Order to which the Noble Lord belongs look at that conduct; and let them (for in this case, I am willing to appeal to them,) pass their judgment upon it. As connected, pretty closely, with this matter, I must mention one thing, with regard to which I do not think that you are altogether inexcusable. The other day, at Hereford, a very base man of the name of SMYTHIES, having taken care to prevent my reply from being heard, charged me with having been in the pay of this Government, while I was writing in America, previous to the year 1800. Now, Sir, I do not say that you are called upon to be my defender. I do not positively say that you or my Lord LIVERPOOL or Mr. HUSKISSON act either basely or unjustly in never having contradicted this malicious and ten thousand times repeated assertion. But this, I will say; that if *I had been in your place, and you in mine*; if I had known of such rare disinterestedness, such

indubitable proof of love of country, such ardent zeal in its cause, and such *decided rejection of all offers of compensation*; that if I had known of you, what you so well know of me, I could not, though you had been ten thousand times more my enemy than I have been yours, have neglected to take *some opportunity of silencing these base calumniators*, of the falsehood of whose assertions, your knowledge is so perfect. However, *late* is better than *never*; and though I have fought my way through in spite of all these calumnies; though I could now dispense with all defence, it would give me pleasure still to receive it at your hands; and to give it, is due to yourselves, and to yourself, in particular; for some of the vile wretches that make use of the calumny, make use of it, in what they deem to be *your service*.

You have too much sagacity not to perceive that a great deal may now depend upon the manner in which I shall act. This, some people will say, is being very ar-



rogant ; but it is a great deal better to speak the truth, even at the risk of exposing oneself to such a charge ; a great deal better than at a time like this, to put on a face of mock modesty, which is, in other words, only playing the hypocrite. You will say that it is very natural for a man to make the most of himself ; but that, one ought to be rather slow in giving full credit to his estimate. It is very true, besides, that I am extremely anxious to triumph. I have, for many years, been waiting to be avenged of all my foes, and of the *race that write*, especially. It may be prudent in you, therefore, to take time to consider before you believe ; but give me leave to say, that it is not prudent to *shut your eyes* against the obvious truth, however painful that truth may be to you. When Lawyer *Scarlett* was calling me a "*contemptible scribbler*," during the debates on Six-Acts ; and when another lawyer, during the same debates, was expressing his regret that there could not

be a *transportation clause*, kindly adapted to my particular case ; when you, Sir, were for driving at the *whole herd* in order to secure the getting at *one mischievous animal*, though I would fain hope that the animal you had in your eye, *was not me* : at that time, not one of you imagined, that you would ever see the present time ; not one of you imagined that I was ever to be heard of again, except in the capacity of a cast-off creature, whom your Acts had crushed, or rendered contemptible. Far different were my calculations. Your denunciations had no terrors in them for me ; and never did I feel more confident of my ultimate triumph, than I did at the very moment when those denunciations were uttered. Nay, I came home from America with nearly a certain knowledge that Six-Acts, or something like them, would be passed. I had read, in Long Island, of the bloody affair at Manchester. I well knew what would follow. I burned, upon

Long Island, every paper, that I did not choose that SIDMOUTH should read. I expected the state of things to be a great deal worse than I found it. And, never shall I forget my words to those friends that came on board when we cast anchor at Liverpool.—“*I am very sorry to see you here, Mr. COB-*”  
 “BETT: *you are jumping into the lion's mouth.*”—“*Yes; but the lion has now got Peel's Bill upon his back,*” said I. In short, they looked so dismal and so frightened; and they stared so and seemed so insensible to every thing that I said, that I was very glad when they went away. My reliance was sound. I knew well the turn that things would take; and lion's jaws, or not lion's jaws, I was determined to be present at the scene which I knew was approaching. With what shame ought Englishmen now to look back, however, to the autumn of 1819. To be sure, I was suffered to land in my native country, unmolested; but only think of the state of things, when well inform-

ed and well educated persons could imagine, that there was danger even in my setting my foot upon English ground! All law, all justice; all idea of such things, appears to have been frightened out of their minds. They supposed *the absence of all crime*. They had no suspicion of *guilt of any sort*; and yet, they were *in apprehensions for my life!* Such a time as that, I trust, is never again to be seen in England. History would be without a parallel to it were it not for the annals of the French Revolution.

Little did any of you, then think that the present day was to come. And now, Sir, look at, and refrain from admiring, if you can; the industry, the unparalleled labours, which I have performed between that day and this, and which have never slackened for one single hour, though amidst pecuniary ruin, amidst bankruptcy, with all its circumstances, far more painful than the thing itself; amidst all sorts of difficulties; look at, and I again say, refrain from

admiring, if you can, what I have done since that landing at Liverpool.

Such efforts, and made, too, under such circumstances, must, of necessity, produce great effect. They must attract admiration even if wrongly directed; even if the person who makes them be found to be in error. What, then, must be their effect, when every day's experience tends to establish the truth of his doctrines? What must be their effect when, from the lips of hundreds of thousands of half-ruined men, they extort the exclamation, "Would to God I had sooner believed Mr. COBBETT!" Why, Sir, the effect is that which we now see; namely, a thorough and settled belief in almost the whole nation, that *I understand its affairs, and that I know how to put an end to its calamities, better than any other man living.* And what I want you to believe, is, that this is the opinion of the nation. You will be very loth to believe it; and for that I do not

blame you; but loth as you may be, it will be very unwise if you reject the evidence of your senses.

In a letter to my Lord GREY, written about two years ago, I told his Lordship, that there were a greater number of persons of understanding, who had confidence in my judgment, as to these matters, than there were of those who had confidence in any other man. This year I thought it was time that the Ministry and the Parliament should have full proof of this. The RICARDOS, the WEBB HALLS, the over-production men; all were demolished; they had all dropt down dead, one after another; but still there was no open and indisputable proof, that the people confided in me to the extent that I had asserted. I was determined, therefore, to put this question to the test. I was determined to poll the Yeomanry of the country, on the first occasion that should offer itself, and that occasion was offered in the county of Norfolk. I saw by the newspapers, that Whig



and Tory had joined to pray for that which I knew would be inefficient. It did not require much knowledge of human nature to be assured that Mr. COKE would do his best to prevent any proposition of mine from being carried. In the excellent sense and high spirit of the farmers of that county I had great confidence; but I had still greater confidence in the high opinion which I thought they entertained of my knowledge. Greater personal partiality than those farmers have for Mr. COKE is impossible to exist; while there did not exist, in the breasts of more than twenty persons in the county, any thing that could be called personal partiality towards me. Here, then, was an occasion for putting the matter to the severest test that could possibly be imagined; and you and all the nation, are acquainted with the result. You have witnessed the childish efforts that have been made to disfigure this result, and to give it any interpretation but the true one; but, as it almost

always happens in similar cases, these efforts only tend to confirm the conclusion, which they are vainly intended to invalidate. —This is a matter of serious consideration for you and your colleagues; or, at least, it would be with me, and if I were in your place. I would not look so much at Surrey. It is barely possible, that a little feeling, a little undue bias might exist there, in favour of a Surrey man. I do not believe in the fact; for, the body of persons assembled in Surrey were manifestly not of that description to be influenced by any such consideration. But, the thing is possible; and, therefore the decision was not so complete, as to the view that I am taking of the matter, as the decision in Norfolk. And, if we grant that the county *did not hear* the petition, then the question is settled, indeed; for they *did hear* the resolutions which were supported by Mr. COKE.

Now, if I were a Minister, and saw all this going on, I should en-

deavour to profit from it; and, laying aside any anger that I might entertain against the man, I should begin seriously to endeavour to find out the means by which he had obtained his high degree of public confidence in his knowledge. I should begin to suspect, that he had truth, reason and justice on his side; and, *not seeing my way clear myself*, I really should think it my duty to consult those writings by which so many hundreds of thousands had been convinced; and if I myself should be convinced by those same writings; shame on me, if I, for one moment, delayed openly and honestly to express my conviction! Shame, indeed, on me, if I would suffer only one more victim to be added to the millions, rather than correct my error, though that error had been detected and pointed out by one, whom I had long been in the habit of reproaching and persecuting! Shame on me, and shame on my very name for ever, if I were to suffer one further act of injustice to be

done, rather than do justice to industry and perseverance superior to my own!

You and your colleagues should consider, that it is a trust that is confided to you; and a trust, too, of indiscribable magnitude. You are to have no petty feelings. You are to indulge in no animosities. If it were a case which could possibly admit of such indulgence, common justice ought to make you consider the provocations I have received, and the moral right that I have to see my triumph proclaimed to the world. But this is no such case. Passion ought to be wholly out of the question with you. Every private feeling ought to be sacrificed to the public good. Far from you ought to be those feelings of which we have seen the disgraceful effects in the barns and holes and corners of Norfolk. To be influenced by such feelings would be to imitate the base press of London, which, all filth and all poison, as it is, I have not been afraid to seize by the throat. In

short, be it COBBETT; be it Tom Paine; or be it Tom the Devil, it is your duty, to receive conviction if you find it, and to proclaim that conviction and resolutely act upon it, be the consequences to your own reputation, what they may.—Supposing you to have brought your mind, then, into this state; being, as you confess yourself to be, unable to *see your way clearly*, here I tender you my hand.

Before I can put you into the right way, I must do, as a woman between ODIHAM and PRESTON CANDOVER told me that she must do by me. “Stop,” said she, “do not be in such a hurry: I must get you out of the *wrong way*, before I put you into the *right*.” And then she very kindly conducted me back down the lane to the point of my deviation, and showed me the road along which I had to go.

The conclusion of the speech, from which I have made an extract, contains a repetition of the doctrine which is contained in the

last paragraph of the King's Speech; which is this, that agriculture must obtain relief eventually from the *prosperity of commerce and manufactures*. It is a little hard and a good deal provoking that we should be compelled to listen to this from you, after we have had to listen to it from the Old Times, the Morning Chronicle, and all the other newspapers, except the *Statesman* and the *Norfolk Yeoman*, from the day that it came forth in the King's Speech, until the present day. Every day is it doled out to us, through these channels of stupidity, and with no more variation in the words than there is in any form of prayer, which has been in use for centuries. It is a good deal provoking, that we should hear this from *you*, without so much as an attempt to refute the argument to the contrary, contained in the letter to Mr. FAWKES, and published in the last Register but one. There it is observed, that, according to the Government account, this prosperity of com-



merce and manufactures has been regularly upon the increase, from the year 1819, to the present day. Now, if this be true; and I do not say that, taking journeymen and masters together, it is not true. If this be true, where is the foundation of the hope which you hold out to the landlords? Take the fact for granted; and then, what have we, in support of your doctrine? It is an undeniable fact, that the distress of agriculture has gone on regularly increasing all the time that the prosperity of commerce and manufactures has gone on increasing. You are not about to *deny* this fact, I hope! What impudent and abominable liars must the counties be; what hypocrites are the lords, the parsons, and the gentry as they call themselves, assembled in the barns and holes and corners in Norfolk; what matchless hypocrites and liars must these be, if the distress have not gone on increasing, and if the whole of the rent be not about to be swallowed up! Well, then, you will not

deny this fact; and, if it be *true*; and if it be also true that the prosperity of commerce and manufactures has gone on increasing, how is any one but an idiot to be made to believe, that the land is to *obtain relief* from the prosperity of commerce and manufactures?

I should be glad to know whence this doctrine of *mutual prosperity* came. If it be not of oracular invention, I should be glad to know where it first took its birth. It seems to be held to be a thing of *necessity*, as completely as the effect of any law of nature. Figures of rhetoric, unless they be unexceptionable as to their fitness, are certainly worse than no figures at all; and your figure; namely: "If Agriculture, or the landed interest," as you called it, "be the *basis* upon which all other interests of the country stand, then it is impossible that those other interests can be benefited, without an advantage to the landed interest." Now, in the first place, this is any thing but conclusive. The foundation of a

house may be very old and very rotten; may be going fast to decay, and yet the upper rooms may be very gaily and richly furnished. But the illustration does not apply; for here it is the superstructure, which you assert to flourish, and whoever heard of mending the up-stairs rooms in order to restore strength to the foundation? It is perfectly true that *all real national resources* come from the land. It is not less true, however, that the land may have drawn from it so much of that which ought to remain with it, that the landed interest may perish; that farmers and landlords and labourers may decay; while those interests which draw too largely upon the land may flourish. A better figure than yours would have been a *tree*, the trunk of which, drawn upon too largely by luxuriant and fruitless branches, becomes feeble, begins to rot, begins to be hollow, and yet holds up in the air most showy and flourishing branches. This is our state. A showy, a false prosperity, and

feebleness at the bottom; a want of power, now visible to all the world, to protect our friends, and to maintain our own honour.

So much for your figure; but let us come back again to the literal doctrine. Experience has proved it to be false; or else the landlords, parsons and farmers are liars and hypocrites too great to be suffered to live. Experience has proved the doctrine to be false; and the doctrine itself is founded upon this notion, that the nation is to be looked upon *as a whole*; as a great trading affair; and that, so that the means be *somewhere*, it does not signify much where they are. This is the foundation of the doctrine. You do not seem to perceive, that no one disputes with you, that there is no absolute destruction of means going on, upon the whole; no total annihilation of property of any kind. This is what I, for one, have never pretended to believe. What I contend for, is this, that a *transfer* of property is going on; and that this transfer,



while it is monstrously unjust with regard to individuals, necessarily causes that sort of application of the means of the country, which renders it impotent with regard to its foreign foes, at the same time that it produces misery amongst those who labour, creates immense swarms of idlers to live at ease, and, frequently, amidst debaucheries, out of those means which ought to feed and clothe these who labour. This is what I contend for. This is what I have been contending for for twenty years. I have always said, that this debt must be reduced, and largely reduced, too, or that the estates must be transferred from the present owners, that the farmers must be brought down to a very low state indeed, and that the labourers must be reduced to a state of half-starvation.

Do you, Sir, offer us any thing to controvert these opinions, which have now received the decided sanction of experience? Not you. You make no attempt to show,

that the transfer is not going on. You express a vague hope, that it will cease, but you offer us no argument to induce us to believe that it will cease. It has gone on with accelerated pace, during the time which that has been increasing which you say must cause it to cease. The prosperity of commerce and manufactures, has not *yet* caused any cessation in this transfer. You offer us no argument to show why it should produce such an effect in future; and yet, you would have us believe that it will produce that effect!

Let me, Sir, beg of you just to take a ride out round this WEN. When you come back you will tell me that you see the foundations and part structure of about *three thousand new houses*. I shall then ask you, whence this can arise? You will hardly have the face to tell me, that it is a proof of increasing *national prosperity*; and I have the vanity to think, that, after getting you to sit down, to forget, for a quarter of



an hour, all the allurements of Whitehall, and all the botheration of its neighbourhood; I am really of opinion, that I should make you confess, that there is something radically wrong; and that, at last, some dreadful scenes must arise, unless measures of prevention be adopted. In short, it is to suppose a man an idiot, to suppose him not to perceive, that this monstrous WEN is now sucking up the vitals of the country.

And by what means does it suck up those vitals, but by the means of that enormous taxation, which takes away the capital of the farmer, the rent of the landlord, and the wages of the labourer? Having taken a ride round London, you then ought to take a ride round the country; go into the country towns, see the wasting tradesmen and their families; but, above all things, go to the *villages*, and see the misery of the labourers; see their misery, compared to the happy state in which they lived before the swellings

out of this corrupt and all-devouring WEN. When I tell you that the villages, the homesteads, the cottages, are growing daily more and more out of repair, you will say it is *not true*; therefore, let that tell for nothing. But you will not deny the wretchedness of the *labourers*! The landlords and the farmers can tell their own tale. They tell their own tale in remonstrances and prayers, addressed to the House. Nobody tells the tale of the labourer. Nobody compares his half belly-full of bread with the living of the fat soldiers, clerks and all the long troop of the dead-weight. Nobody compares his skin and bone with the fat cheeks of the pampered purveyors to the pleasures of the placemen and the pensioners. But, enough has come to your knowledge, for you to be well assured that his situation is a thousand times harder than that of those negroes about whom so much is said in the speech from the throne. How happens it, that he is become so miserable; how hap-

pens it that he is ready to prefer transportation for poaching to his present state; how happens it that, upon an average, three quarters of a bushel of wheat is now his weekly pay, instead of the two bushels and a half of wheat, that he formerly received; how does this happen, while this immense number of houses are rising up about London? Can any one but an idiot fail to perceive, that he is robbed of his food, his raiment, his fuel, and that the worth of all these is *transferred*, along with the rent of the landlord and the capital of the farmer, to fatten those who live in these new houses?

It is a *transfer* which is going on from one part of the community to the other part of the community; and, therefore, to suppose that the land is to recover because prosperity exists amongst the other interests, is to adopt the monstrous absurdity, that, because I, who am getting your estate from you; because I prosper, who am getting the estate, you must prosper, who are losing the estate.

Curiously, indeed, must that head be constructed, in which the belief can exist, that my prosperity must *finally* communicate prosperity to you. Very good evidence, indeed, is my increasing prosperity, of your certain ruin; but, to believe just the contrary of this, is, indeed, a "*mental delusion*."

Thus, then, goes off, into very thin air, this great and fashionable delusion of the day, intended to cajole the landlords along for another year. And, now, let us talk of the "*collateral remedies*." You divide remedies into direct and collateral. With what propriety you call them in this way I shall not now enquire, nor is it of much consequence, so long as we get rid of the delusion which I have so fully noticed above. To me it is of no consequence what epithet you apply to the *taking off of taxes*; whether you call it direct or collateral; being quite satisfied that that is the *only way* of affording effectual relief, and being extremely happy to hear you say, that the



Government has turned its attention to *that course*. But, Sir, it is the *degree* which is all important in this case. I perceive that the intended reduction is to be *in direct taxation*. Now, Sir, all the direct taxes put together do not exceed *seven millions* a-year. It is very true that seven out of about sixty would produce some effect: but I venture to assert that it must be nearer six times seven before the landlord, the farmer and the labourer can be brought back safely to the state in which they were, previous to Pitt's all-destroying career. Yes, I say six times seven; much nearer to that than once seven, before the nation, can again be able to face its foreign foes, and before it can say that there is any thing like safety for property in England.

This is not to be effected without a large reduction of the interest of the debt; and that is not to be effected without an equitable adjustment of contracts between man and man. Shrink from these,

you may, for some time; but they must both take place, or a convulsive revolution is our lot. As I told you before, "our destiny has not yet done with us." You and I and Lord LIVERPOOL and Mr. HUSKISSON have yet to live and to see this thing out. *My advice* must be followed; or a convulsive revolution is the end. People wonder, why you should have chosen to take off the *direct taxes*. I can easily perceive a very good reason for it. You have heard of the consequences of sending *distresses* into men's houses. You have heard of sales of distrained goods, where there have been *no bidders*. You wisely, *for yourselves*, propose to put an end to those taxes, which bring the taxgatherer into immediate personal conflict with the taxpayer. The remainder of the salt tax, the whole of the malt and hop tax, the leather tax: it is these which the *land* is deeply interested in getting rid of. But these are collected without the taxgatherer *being seen* by the



person who pays the tax. It is curious enough that while the land is in such distress, while the labouring classes are suffering so severely from the pressure of taxation, you should intend to lighten the load, not where it presses upon agriculture, but where it lies upon the *rich* and upon the receivers of taxes. To be sure, the window tax falls in part upon tradesmen; but the whole of the direct taxes fall principally upon the rich and the tax-receivers. The great and grievous taxes on malt, hops and leather, you still leave. You take off, too, only *part* of a tax; so that all the patronage and the whole swarm of tax-gatherers, and all the monopoly arising from taxation still remain; and, in this way of going on, there will be nearly as much paid to the tax-gatherers after your reductions are made, as is paid to them now.

However, far be it from me to disapprove of taking off the assessed taxes. Take them off, in God's name; but there must be

*forty millions* of taxes taken off; or, I say it again and again, there will be a convulsive revolution. I suppose, however, that you mean to continue Mr. PEEL'S Bill untouched. And here I will state that which begins to be rumoured about, relating to this terrific part of the subject. It is positively asserted by some, and as positively denied by others, that *ships are preparing for sea*, and that you are going to equip and send out a fleet. Mr. HUSKISSON'S speech, at Liverpool, must have been strangely misrepresented, or the affirmative is the truth; that is to say, unless I suppose, which I do not, that Mr. HUSKISSON is a very indiscreet person, and talks very much at random. In this speech he is reported to have said that you have firmly opposed the principles of aggression, avowed by the powers hostile to Spain. He then proceeds to state his own view of the matter; and, after this he observes that if the present "interference in the affairs of Spain,

"be admitted to be right, there will no longer be safety to ourselves." Now if Mr. HUSKISSON did utter these words, or any words to the same effect, we must conclude him to have been in a state of "*mental delusion*," unless you mean to take part with the Spaniards.

It is thought by many that you do mean to take such part; that you mean to *repeal Peel's Bill*; and that, as to the ultimate consequences of such repeal, you mean to jump over that ditch, as well as you can, when you come to it. Many are wishing to know my opinion as to whether you will do this or not; and I have great difficulty in giving any opinion upon the subject. I know the consequences of such a measure; I know where an issue of *assignats* must end; and I know that this must be an issue of *assignats*. Real *assignats*; that is to say, paper-money, *never to be converted into coin*. Lord LIVERPOOL said the other day, that, to change the standard from gold to silver,

would be a partial bankruptcy, and this is prayed for by the Scotch landholders and farmers, and at the instigation, too, of Sir JOHN SINCLAIR, who is one of the King's Privy Council. If this would be a partial bankruptcy, what would it be to issue a paper-money not convertible into metal at all? This would be an open, complete and entire bankruptcy, which every one must see, would end, in not paying one single sixpence in the pound. I leave out of view the great sufferings of a new and numerous class of sufferers. I leave out of view all the confusion in private contracts and transactions; for these I think you would disregard, when put in the scale against the opposite danger. But, to screw up your nerves to an issue of real *assignats*, to a general and notorious bankruptcy; and to all the consequences that might arise out of it; to screw up your nerves to this, is more than I can bring myself to believe that you will do.

I say, to believe that you will

do; for I may think the thing possible, and yet not be able to say that I believe the thing will be done. However, I say this upon the presumption, that you see this matter in the light that I see it; and I am, by no means sure that you do. Then, on the other hand, how great, how complicated, how embarrassing, how tormenting the difficulties which you have to face, unless you resort to *war and assignats*! All your hopes of *things coming about* have vanished. The little folly that I have noticed above, about the landed interest being restored to prosperity by the prosperity of commerce and manufactures: this is a short dream, into which you have dropped, after having been roused from the long trance, into which HORNER, TIERNEY, and RICCARDO had lulled you. Recovered from the effects of their soporifics, you have just dropped into the dream of *mutual prosperity*. That dream will be over in less than two months; and

then, with fatigued intellect, and haggard countenance, you will behold all the horrors of your situation. Thousands upon thousands will have dropped off; but the landlords will not, at last give up their estates without a struggle, *very different, indeed from any which you have yet seen*. The thing advances with accelerated pace, as I have frequently observed. Every year produces more ruin and more irritation than the year that has gone before it. Last year no county petitioned for a reduction of the debt, except the county of Kent, and that petition, or, at least, that prayer, was ascribable to me. This year, to pray for such reduction may be called the *order of the day*. Not from popular assemblies alone, do this prayer come; but from meetings with closed doors; from bodies of gentlemen and of noblemen. As to my personal influence, it could have nothing to do with the decision in Cambridgeshire. Numerous other instances might be named; but you have now a pe-



tition coming up from the agricultural association of Glamorganshire; from a society of noblemen and gentlemen coolly deliberating in private; you have a petition coming from them, to tell you, that you have, in fact, taken from them all their rights as landlords, and made them "*mere trustees or stewards to the fundholders.*" This is what I told them; long ago, they would be made; this is what they now are; this is what they declare themselves to be; and the next thing that I, if I were a minister, should expect to hear from them, is, that they were *resolved to be Trustees and Stewards no longer.* As sure as your name is GEORGE CANNING, so sure will you hear this, before many months have passed over your head; and it is real matter of astonishment, that you have not heard it already. Such a mass of hereditary pride, such a mass of uncontrolled sway, never was yet taken from men, and from a body so numerous too, without a struggle. Recollect, Sir, that they

are the Magistrates too. You have experienced the efficacy of their power, when exerted in your *favour*; and let me beg you to believe, that men will not possess such power and see themselves stripped and degraded, without an effort to avoid the stripping and the degradation; and, especially, when they are so clearly convinced that the stripping is unjust.

Yet, there is no way of putting a stop to this stripping but by a large reduction of the interest of the Debt, and an almost total sweeping away of all patronage and all great emolument arising out of the public money. To do these things would really be to effect what you have always seemed to deem a revolution. It would certainly produce a total alteration of the system; it would in a great measure break up this enormous WEN; it would make such a change in the character and in the very nature of the Government, that, if you were to remain Secretary of State, and

could take a sleep while the change was going on, you would, when you waked, hardly believe that you were in the same world that you had lived in before.

To avoid this there appears, then, to be nothing but *war and assignats*. And here we come again to the question, *Which will you choose?* It is very hard to say. When evils are so nearly balanced, the decision is mere chance work. But, as I said before, much depends upon the view that you take of the dangers in one case, compared with the dangers in the other. You are great *hoppers* at Whitehall; and, I dare say, you do not in either case take the same view of the dangers that I do. I am compelled, therefore, to reason upon supposition. Supposing you to take the same view of those dangers, I should, were I to judge from the general conduct that you have pursued, be inclined to think that you would choose the most distant danger; that you would choose to march in the path that afforded you the most chances of

escape. Now, it is certain that the "*stern path*," that is to say, the path of Peel's Bill, and an adjustment of contracts, public and private; it is very certain that this path, if you choose it, demands an immediate beginning to march, and precludes the possibility of escape. Into the path you must enter, and on you must go, till you have not a fragment of reputation left as public men, and until you have *put the palm of victory on my head!*

I think I hear you groan! Groan, or groan not, however, such must be the result. To avoid this, war and assignats, would be by no means effectual; but it would *gain time*; and how desirable we always are, in such cases, of gaining time, is too well known to the hearts of us all. Besides, if you should happen not to see the dangers attendant on war and assignats, then you will assuredly decide for war and assignats; and there is this very strong temptation to that decision, that you will have with you, and



decidedly with you, cordially and clamorously with you, all the Landlords, all the Farmers, all the commercial and manufacturing people who have any weight; all the naval and military people; aye, and all the parsons, to the last man. There will be nobody to give you opposition; that is to say, nobody that will be listened to. If I should put forth ominous predictions, the nation will swear, as it did at the time of the *Jubilee*, that I am a fool, and a madman, and an enemy of Old England. But my predictions will not be ominous: that is another thing. I shall hoist the *Gridiron*, to be sure; but people will be so pleased with having "*plenty of money again*," that they will only laugh at my gridiron for a week, and then it will be forgotten. *I shall be as well pleased as the rest*; and, as my lord EGREMONT observed at Lewes, the devil is in it if that is not enough to say of any measure of the government! I shall be pleased, because I shall then see that the axe is laid to the

root of the tree of corruption; because I shall see that the System has got a blow from which it can never recover. These are powerful temptations, and I should not be surprised if they were to prevail. Long habit have made the farmers join the idea of war and of prosperity together. They would like it of all things; they would not see that which was behind, and great numbers would not perceive that it was a bankruptcy; that is to say, they would not see it at first; and then, the parliament might resolve again, that a bank note and a shilling were as good as a guinea: at any rate, time would be gained. The tremendous petitions would want no answering: and, therefore, upon the whole, if I were compelled to stake my life on one side or the other; I should be very sorry to be so compelled, to be sure: it is so nearly an even chance that I would not voluntarily stake a pin upon the decision; but if I were compelled to venture much, it certainly would be on war and assignats.



It was my intention, when I began this paper, to give you my views with regard to the means of carrying into execution that equitable adjustment of contracts, both public and private, for which the counties are now praying. Here, and here alone, are we to look for real relief, unless there be war and assignats. But, I find that my paper has grown short, and that I must postpone further observations on this matter. I shall conclude, therefore, with a recommendation to those who have gold, to *keep it*; and to those who have it not, to get it as soon as they can. It is impossible that the present Session of Parliament can pass over without some direct proposition for a reduction of the interest of the Debt; and, whenever that proposition shall be made in an earnest manner, and shall be manfully supported, the jack-daws may begin to prepare for building their nests in that earthly hell of iniquity where jews and jobbers meet to defraud the unwary. Those, whose love of money,

whose vicious habits, have made them calculators of interest, and, therefore, have kept their money, as it is called, in the funds, may one of these days have to repent of their greediness. They have preferred this species of security to every other species of security. Their motives, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, have been bad, and come their punishment when it may, it will come unaccompanied with pity from the just part of mankind.

LORD LIVERPOOL is reported to have said, that we are *able to go to war*, if nothing be done to *shake public credit*! It is too much of a farce to suppose that he meant to go to war with taxes paid in gold. What he must mean therefore, is, that we can draw out the paper again *as we did before*. Several times has it been said, in defence of this paper system, "that it *enabled us to carry on the war*." So it did, *one war*; but it will not enable us to carry on another war! Bank Restriction Act and Peel's Bill are a pair, like Adam

and Eve: the world can never see but one such pair. During the debates upon Peel's Bill, Lord GRENVILLE said, that, if it were to do again, so much did he abhor the paper bubble, that he would not resort to it, let the country be reduced to whatever extremity it might; that he would rather see *any thing* happen, no matter what, than resort to such a measure. Yet, *go to war without it we cannot.*

This, Sir, then, is the point to which we have arrived. You have been an actor in the system, almost all the way through. In your hands, as much as in the hands of any one, the system now is. I cannot say, without hypocrisy, that I wish you well out of it; but I can sincerely say that I wish you life and health to see it to its close. And in the meanwhile, I remain

Your most obedient and

Most humble Servant,

WM. COBBETT.

## NORFOLK YEOMAN'S GAZETTE.

THIS is a weekly paper, published under my direction, and may be had in any part of the kingdom, as well as in Norfolk, by application to No. 183, Fleet-street, London. Those gentlemen that wish to be furnished with a weekly paper, containing a true account of the state of affairs, a correct account of what passes in Parliament, and who wish to see the interest of the country maintained against that of the jews and jobbers, will, in this paper, find what they want.—It is necessary to make a stand against this band of marauders on the land and labour of the country; and if that stand be not effectually made, the fault shall not be mine. This vile horde, aided by a stock-jobbing press, and backed by the stupidity and the cowardice of a part of the landlords, are making a desperate struggle to get at the remaining

resources of the country. At the time of the South Sea bubble, the town of Leicester prayed the House of Commons, "to prevent the last drop of the nation's blood from being licked up by *cannibals of 'Change Alley.*" So let us pray them now; for I am sure we are in greater danger than our forefathers were from the 'Change Alley cannibals of those days. Those cannibals were, comparatively, few in number. Our distressed, bleeding and dying state appears to have drawn together all the cannibals, from every part of the globe. To drive the monsters away from their prey, the Yeomen of Norfolk have made, at any rate, one bold attempt, and to assist in upholding them, in their laudable undertaking, is one of the objects of the Norfolk Yeoman's Gazette.

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### PARLIAMENTARY COMMENTARY.

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[From "*The STATESMAN*" daily  
*Evening Newspaper*, Feb. 20.]

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IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS,  
NOTHING took place last night  
of any importance. Their Lord-

ships seemed to be almost wholly taken up with motions and information relative to the *Marriage Act.*

#### IN THE COMMONS,

The new Turnpike Act appears to be undergoing some revision; but of what nature or tendency we do not clearly understand. We shall watch this Act; for, the Act of last Session will hardly be attempted to be put in force. It is perfectly outrageous, as applicable to many parts of the country.—*Jesuits in Ireland.*—Mr. Brownlow presented three petitions, from different parts of Ireland, complaining that the Jesuits had, by their machinations, stirred up mischief in that country; and that they had *established themselves there*, and particularly in the south. We look upon this as the onset of a very great struggle. The Orangemen, that is to say, the resolute Protestants, who possess many good things, and who are by no means insensible of the value of the possession, seem resolved not to wait for the enemy. They have begun the attack; and, according to all their former practice, we have not the smallest doubt of seeing them push on with vigour. None of the Ministers, nor of the ministerial people, said any thing upon the subject. But



Mr. Hutchinson and Sir H. Parnell positively denied that there was any such thing as an establishment of Jesuits in Ireland; and Mr. Hutchinson expressed a wish to have the petition rejected. Mr. Rice said, there was no crime in there being an establishment of Jesuits in Ireland. And he acknowledged that there was prevailing an opinion in Ireland, that they had established themselves there. Mr. Brownlow said, that he could not say precisely where the Jesuits were established. Sir John Newport was for receiving the petition. Mr. Brougham said, that this was the first time the Jesuits had ever been accused of promoting ignorance and darkness; for that they were the patrons of *education*. A good deal depends upon the meaning which we attach to the word education. If by education is meant mere *book learning*, the Jesuits may be the patrons of that for any thing that we know; but, in spite of the vile misrepresentation now pouring forth upon Mr. Banks, on account of what he is falsely said to have said upon the subject, we abide by our opinion expressed and addressed to the labouring classes, in the little work called "COTTAGE ECONOMY;" to which work, if an answer can be given,

we should like to see that answer. In the mean time, let this serve to check the abuse which is now pouring forth upon Mr. Banks; that as the schools, as the tracts, as all these new inventions have been increasing, so has the character of the people of England been changing for the worse; so has idleness, so have immoralities; so have crimes of all sorts been increasing. These facts are notorious; along with the increase of what is called *education*, has been the increase of the severity of the criminal law. We should like to hear the educators give some explanation of this. We have never been admirers of Mr. Banks's political conduct: but we detest these vile misrepresentations; and we believe, besides, that that which is imputed to him was uttered by his son and not by him.—As to the Jesuits, we think that the errors which they are said to inculcate are as little mischievous, at any rate, as the workings of the Methodists, though the *Morning Chronicle* would have the Methodists encouraged, in order to counteract the Jesuits.—The same paper cannot see why an establishment of this sort in Ireland can be worse than an establishment of the same sort at Stoney-Hurst in Lancashire. This

may be very true ; but what has this to do with the question. We, for our parts, have not the smallest doubt, that the Catholic priests, in a state of perfect toleration and an absence of all religious establishments *by law*, would, in the course of half a century drive out the priests of all other sects, as weasels drive rats out of a barn. The Catholic priests are powerful, not on account of their doctrines or their faith ; but on account of their *manners*, and particularly on account of their unmarried state. They always were more esteemed and beloved by the people than the priests of any other faith, and they always will be. If we could have our will, they should have a fair run, as they had in America ; and then there would be no more quarrels about the matter.—That which is of the greatest interest, however, as connected with these petitions, is, the clear proof which they afford of the resolution of the Orangemen not to be beaten an inch from their ground ; and to this resolution we are confident they will adhere, until a total change shall take place in the manner of conducting the affairs of Ireland. *Lieutenant General of the Ordnance.*—Mr. Hume had a stout battle to fight last night upon this subject. He was opposed by Mr. Ward

and Mr. Canning, who made a most furious attack upon him. Long stories were told by them of the sincerity of the Duke of Wellington, of his wondrous abilities and services ; then of the wondrous abilities and services of Lord Beresford ; and, at last, Mr. Canning, after it had been proposed by Mr. Macdonald that Mr. Hume should *withdraw* his motion, declared that he *would not let him withdraw it*. The House at last divided :—73 for Mr. Hume, and 200 against him. The only persons that spoke on the side of Mr. Hume, were Mr. Williams, and Mr. James Macdonald. Mr. Hume received the furious charge of the enemy, with coolness and with all that persevering courage which has marked the whole of his conduct.—He does not appear to have been at all daunted by the conduct of his foes ; nor by that of his “FRIENDS.” We know well that the people will every where do justice to Mr. Hume. What could be more proper than this motion ; what more proper than to say that the giving of this unnecessary salary to this lord was contrary to the professions of economy put by the Ministers into the Speech from the Throne. What could be more *true* than this !



what a more sacred duty to the people, than to make this motion? Yet, see the result!—However, let Mr. Hume have only a little patience; let him persevere, as he certainly will; let him not be discouraged, though only one single man vote with him; nay, though he stand by himself; let him persevere, and he will see that the people will know how to distinguish between him and his “FRIENDS.” Alas! those dear friends, to consult with whom Mr. Canning kindly recommended him; those dear friends have very different views from Mr. Hume. Let him, however, work on as he is working, and he need not care much about those dear friends. During the evening, a notice was given by Lord Folkestone, relative to a petition that he meant to present to-morrow, regarding the wrong complained of by a *mortgager*. His Lordship said it was his intention to ground a subsequent motion upon this petition. We shall be very anxious to see the purport and tendency of this petition and motion; for this touches the great point of all; namely, that necessity for rectifying contracts; on which necessity we have so often insisted.

## MARKETS.

Average Prices of CORN throughout ENGLAND, for the week ending 8th February.

Per Quarter.

	s.	d.
Wheat .....	40	5
Rye .....	23	0
Barley .....	23	0
Oats .....	17	8
Beans .....	25	6
Peas .....	30	1

Corn Exchange, Mark Lane.

Quantities and Prices of British Corn, &c. sold and delivered in this Market, during the week ended Saturday, 8th February.

Qr.	£.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Wheat 11,957 for 26,458	8	11	Average, 44	3	
Barley .7,108	10,766	9	4	30	3
Oats .17,239	18,318	3	11	21	3
Rye .....					
Beans .2,607	3,255	19	11	24	11
Peas .1,686	2,817	6	2	33	5

SMITHFIELD, Monday, Feb. 17th.

Per Stone of 8 pounds (alive).

	s.	d.	s.	d.
Beef .....	3	6	to 4	2
Mutton .....	3	8	— 4	2
Veal .....	4	4	— 5	4
Pork .....	3	6	— 4	4
Lamb .....	0	0	— 0	0
Beasts ... 2,378			Sheep ... 16,760	
Calves .... 157			Pigs ..... 250	

NEWGATE (same day).

Per Stone of 8 pounds (dead).

	s.	d.	s.	d.
Beef .....	2	4	to 3	4
Mutton .....	2	4	— 3	6
Veal .....	3	0	— 5	0
Pork .....	2	8	— 4	8
Lamb .....	0	0	— 0	0



City, 19 Feb. 1823.

### BACON.

There has been a struggle between the Manufacturers and the Cheesemongers: the former refusing to ship under 28s. on board; and the latter declining to give that price. At length, however, the Cheesemongers have given way; and the Manufacturers now demand 30s. And *this price* they will obtain if they stand firm, of which, indeed, there seems to be no doubt. The present price landed is 32s.; but as the demand is good we think there will be an advance. The *Old* continues to go off, and prices advance: some sales have been made as high as 24s. Upon the whole there is a disposition to run prices up a little.

### BUTTER.

If a plentiful supply of Dutch come in shortly, the stocks of old Irish must be put by for next season. The holders are growing uneasy. Some wish to revive the public auctions; but the Cheesemongers, supported by a respectable Broker, are determined to discountenance them. The Cheesemongers have very wisely resolved to look after their own interests, and no longer leave them a prey to a set of adventurers calling themselves Merchants and Agents.—Carlow, 80s. to 82s.—Belfast (if fine,) 78s.—Newry, 74s.—Dublin and Waterford, 68s. to 70s.—Cork and Limerick, 68s.

### CHEESE

Is advancing very rapidly in the Country; but in London not materially. —There have been such quantities of *old* of several descriptions selling at such various prices that it has, for some time past, been quite impossible to give quotations. 10s. per Cwt. difference for the same article, has been made, according to the circumstances under which the article was sold.

#### HAY and STRAW, per Load.

Smithfield.—Hay . . .	60s. to 80s.
Straw . . .	40s. to 50s.
Clover . .	80s. to 85s.
St. James's.—Hay . . .	60s. to 80s.
Straw . .	36s. to 46s.
Clover . .	65s. to 84s.
Whitechapel.—Hay . .	68s. to 84s.
Straw . .	30s. to 48s.
Clover . .	70s. to 90s.

#### Price of HOPS, per Cwt. in the BOROUGH.

##### New Bags.

Kent . . . . .	£ 2 5—£ 4 0
Sussex . . . . .	2 0— 2 10
Essex . . . . .	— —
Yearling Bags . .	25s.—35s.

##### New Pockets.

Kent . . . . .	£ 2 10—£ 4 0
Sussex . . . . .	2 5— 2 16
Essex . . . . .	2 10— 3 16
Farnham . . . . .	5 12— 6 10
Yearling Pockets .	25s.—40s.